extremely high rate of interest, to Christian religious houses.[1]

§in

Other than money-lending, there was one calling only, or at the most two, which the Jew was normally permitted to practise in Christian Europe. In order to prevent any competition with the non-Jewish merchants, closely organised in Gilds to which he was not admitted, he was in most cases rigorously excluded from ordinary trade—that is, purchasing from the manufacturer or producer, and selling to the consumer. But this restriction did not extend to second-hand commodities. Accordingly the Jew was the universal ragman and old-clothes dealer. Attempts were made to exclude him even from this unenviable walk of life (in Venice, for example, the gild of *strazzaiuoli* periodically voiced its indignation, and begged that this concession should be withdrawn), but generally speaking, no difficulties were raised. Finally, though prohibited from opening a shop, the Jew was normally allowed to hawk unimportant trifles (sometimes of home manufacture), in the countryside if not in the towns: and, throughout Western Europe, the "Jew Pedlar", pack on back, was a familiar figure in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

These three callings—money-lending, old-clothes dealing and peddling—were the only ones which were universally permitted in Europe down to the period of the iFrench Revolution. Here and there were

exceptions—
more generous facilities, conceded either to individuals

[1] The story of Shylock, the prototype of the Jewish usurer of legend, is symptomatic of the manner in which fantasy has been allowed to travesty fact. The story of the pitiless creditor and the pound of flesh first appears in the sixteenth century, as sober history, with a Koman Jew, Samson Cesena, as victim and a Christian merchant, Paolo Secchi, as his persecutor. In *The Merchant of Venice,* the incident is reproduced, but the roles are reversed!